

Table 2-5 Alternative Routes Comparison - Montana

		Alternative Routes	Links	Length (miles)	Public Lands Crossed (miles)	Private Lands Crossed (miles)	Cost (millions of dollars)	Ground Disturbance Estimates (acres)		Environmental Impacts												Public Acceptability		Notes	
										Visual Impacts		Biological Resources		Soil Erosion	Land Uses						Cultural Resources				
								Temp	Perm	Impact Level (miles)	Visual Compatibility	Impact Level (miles)	Migration Corridors and Habitats	Impact Level (miles)	Impact Level (miles)	Houses within 1000 feet	Houses within 500 feet	Corridor Utilization	Subdivisions Crossed	Other Direct Conflicts	Impact Level (miles) and comments	Number of Streams Crossed (perennial)			
Montana Routes	Townsend to Mill Creek (Melrose)	Alternative A1 Preferred Route	1,3-1,7-2,7-41,7-42,7-5,7-8,11-22,11-21,7-9,11-23	113	28.6	84.5	\$157.5*	509	407	M - 63.2 H - 26.9	8.5 miles	M - 87.0 H - 0.9	Very high- and low-priority migration corridors crossed; waterfowl production at Missouri River crossing, big game winter habitat	M - 33.9	M - 19.4 H - 2.0	90	22	Best balance between minimizing impacts and using corridors	Subdivided land north of Cardwell; several crossings of subdivided lands from south Butte area and Buxton; subdivision near Divide	H - 2.1 Pipestone Mining District along Link 7-2	27	Least public and agency concern	Least miles of significant visual impacts; least overall impact between Townsend and Mill Creek		
		Alternative A2 Parallel Colstrip Route	1,4-1,4-2,7-9,11-21,11-22,11-23	135.6	69.5	66.1	\$135.6*	537	538	M - 77.1 H - 27.6	18.1 miles	M - 105.6 H - 3.2	Tree clearing across the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest would be concern for classic habitat fragmentation; waterfowl production concern at Missouri River crossing, summer elk on forest	M - 50.5	M - 29.0 H - 1.9	32	8	No designated utility corridor by Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest; requires 1800 feet separation from Colstrip lines for reliability	Crosses developed subdivision north of Boulder; subdivision near Divide	H - 2.6 Greatest number of documented and eligible cultural resources	56	Crosses through developed area north of Boulder	Most soil erosion hazard; highest impact to water resources		
		Alternative A3 Maximize Utility Corridor Route	2-1,2-3,7-2,7-41,7-42,7-5,7-61,7-62,7-72,7-9,11-21,11-22,11-23	129	28.4	100.4	\$144.3*	573	460	M - 70.7 H - 31.5	8.7 miles	M - 77.6 H - 0.7	Very high- and low-priority migration corridors crossed; waterfowl production at Missouri River crossing, big game winter habitat	M - 37.0	M - 21.7 H - 2.6	132	38	Most miles of parallel to existing transmission lines	Subdivided lands south of Butte and from here to Mill Creek; Buxton area; subdivision near Divide	H - 3.0	31	Concern for developing area in Broadwater County near I-90 and Highway 287	Most visual impacts		
	Mill Creek (Melrose) to State Line	Alternative B1 Preferred Route	11-3,16-1,16-2,16-4	87.2	50.4	36.8	\$103.9*	384	377	M - 35.6 H 13.2	No compatibility issues	M - 64.9 H - 10.2	Within I-15 corridor which will reduce concern for wildlife movement corridors; waterfowl production area north of Clark Canyon Reservoir on Beaverhead River, quality sage grouse habitat and lekking areas	M - 26.9	M - 5.2 H - 1.9	9	2	Corridor preference of agencies; I-15 helps establish this corridor as already impacted; Westwide Corridor Programmatic EIS expected to match alignment east of Red Rock River valley	Subdivision crossed at Apex and Lima	Crosses fishing access site on Link 16-1; conservation easement north of Clark Canyon Reservoir	H - 0.6	14	Strong agency preference	Visual impacts similar on all alternatives; crosses Class A scenery on Big Hole River	
		Alternative B2 Sheep Creek Route	11-4,18-1	86.9	53.2	33.7	\$103.3*	383	292	M - 32.2 H - 14.6	1.5 miles	M - 78.1	Important wildlife migration through this area for large mammals and forest carnivores, quality sage grouse habitat and lekking areas	M - 2.2	M - 5.4 H - 2.9	8	5	Corridor utilized; public lands designated utility corridor for existing 230kV line, but less preferred by agencies than the I-15 corridor	Obstruction to glide path for Dell Airport; crosses 3 miles of conservation easement at the mouth of Medicine Lodge Creek; visual impacts to Big Sheep Backcountry Byway		29	Strong preference against this route by the resource agencies	Least overall impact between Mill Creek and State Line; least impact to water resources; lowest soil erosion hazard; crosses Class A scenery on Big Hole River		
		Alternative B3 I-15 Route	11-3,16-1,16-3,16-4	88.3	42.9	45.4	\$105.4*	390	359	M - 35.0 H - 12.7	No compatibility issues	M - 70.9 H - 7.2	Within I-15 corridor which will reduce concern for wildlife movement corridors; waterfowl production area north of Clark Canyon Reservoir on Beaverhead River, quality sage grouse habitat and lekking areas	M - 27.1	M - 10.8 H 3.6	11	3	Corridor preference of agencies; I-15 helps establish this corridor as already impacted; agricultural land and visual impacts in Red Rock Creek valley	Subdivision crossed at Apex and Lima	Crosses fishing access site on Link 16-1; crosses 3 miles of conservation easement at the mouth of Medicine Lodge Creek; crosses pivot irrigation in Red Rock Creek valley	H - 0.6	14	Concern about impacts in Red Rock Creek valley	Crosses Class A scenery on Big Hole River	
Alternative AB1 Jefferson Valley I-15 Route		1,3-1,7-2,7-41,7-42,7-5,7-8,11-22,11-21,7-9,8,16-1,16-2,16-4	209	86.1	123.1	\$200.4*	925	866	M - 110.1 H - 37.4	5.5 miles	M - 167.1 H - 12.2	Very high- and low-priority migration corridors crossed; waterfowl production at Missouri River crossing, big game winter habitat, quality sage grouse habitat and lekking areas	M - 78.8	M - 22.1 H - 5.3	99.0	26	There are no existing lines in the Jefferson Valley and there are no designated utility corridors.		H - 3.7	41	Public concern for establishing new corridor where none currently exist	Most miles of new line not parallel to other existing lines. This route would parallel the least miles of designated corridor or existing transmission line of any of the routes considered in Montana. This route would also require the addition of a switching station not required by any other alternative.			
No Action Alternative		No Impact				No Impact				No Impact				No Impact				No Impact							

Note: The Townsend to Mill Creek alternatives must be combined with the Mill Creek to State Line alternatives to make complete Montana routes for comparison to the Jefferson Valley I-15 route. For example, the A1 and B1 alternatives are combined to form a complete Preferred Route for Montana. \* Line costs only (no station or right of way). Total for each alternative includes materials, construction labor and equipment. These costs are for comparison purposes.